

Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

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Executive Director

Executive Registry
83-4625

NOTE FOR: Hal Larson
Intelligence Division
U.S. Customs Service

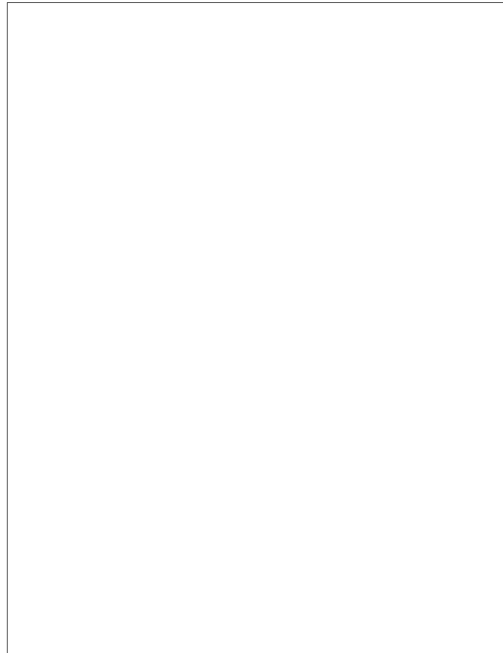
FROM: Executive Assistant/Executive
Director

[redacted] asked that this be
forwarded for Commissioner von Raab's
use with reference to conversations
they had during his meeting at CIA.

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Enclosure



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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

THE SOVIET FORCED LABOR SYSTEM

SUMMARY

Forced labor is at the core of the Soviet penal system and we currently estimate that it encompasses some 4 million Soviet citizens in its ranks, at least half of whom are incarcerated in over a thousand heavily-secured forced labor camps scattered throughout the USSR. Most of the remainder are parolees and probationers--unconfined in the strictest sense, but forced to work, usually at construction projects far from their homes. Recent trends indicate an increase in unconfined forced laborers while the number of confined prisoners remains about the same as during the last decade. (U)

Unconfined forced laborers are sentenced (in the case of probationers) or are released (parolees) to perform mostly low skill labor on large construction projects, often in remote regions where labor is scarce and incentives for attracting and keeping free laborers are expensive. Thousands of these unconfined forced laborers, for example, were used on construction of the huge Kama River truck plant (the world's largest) and the Baykal-Amur Mainline (BAM) railroad. Recent evidence--including reports from the International Society for Human Rights--confirms the present use of parolees and probationers on large domestic pipelines, in particular for construction of compressor stations. (U)

Because of the use of forced laborers in the past and because of current labor shortages in the USSR, it is likely that forced laborers will be used on almost any large construction project in the USSR, including pipelines such as the West Siberia-to-Europe natural gas export line. In addition, because of their widespread distribution, forced labor camps can be found near most major construction projects or pipeline routes. For example, 90 to 100 camps are close to the proposed route of the export pipeline (see Map 1). Heavily secured prisoners could be tapped for work because of their proximity, even though the problems of controlling and guarding them would be difficult. The International Society for Human Rights alleges that this is so, but we cannot independently confirm their reports. (U)

While large-scale use of forced laborers on the export pipeline is unlikely because many of the jobs require special skills, some forced labor will probably be used unless the Soviets depart from their usual practice because of the exposure the issue has received in the Western media. If historical precedent is followed, the unskilled forced laborers will be used in construction of compressor stations and auxiliary buildings--most of which are in an early stage of construction. (U)

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